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**AN EXAMINATION OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACT OF
'TRANSNATIONAL MARRIAGE' BETWEEN CITIZENS OF THE
UK AND THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT**

By

HANNAH CAMERON

Brussels School of International Studies

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It is estimated that 49% of all males and 32% of females in Britain from an Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi background marry resident citizens of the Indian subcontinent in what is termed in this essay as a 'transnational marriage'.¹ The practice of transnational marriage between nationals of Pakistan, Bangladesh and India and immigrants of these countries who are residents or citizens in the UK is a consequence of the transnational communities that exist across borders. This essay will firstly consider the historical context of family and spouse immigration to the UK from the Indian subcontinent. Secondly, the definition of transnationalism and the role that transnational marriages play in the perpetuation of transnational communities in this context will be addressed. Finally, this essay will evaluate the demographic impact of transnational marriage on British society. This will include a discussion of the gendered trends in transnational marriage, the distribution and integration of immigrant communities and the impact of transnational marriage on the fertility rate. Through this discussion I will aim to demonstrate the hitherto under-researched demographic impact of transnational marriage, which in this context has the effect of impeding both individual and group integration of immigrants from the Indian subcontinent into British society.

Historical Context

Immigration from the Indian subcontinent to the UK became significant after 1945 and increased during the 1950s in response to labour demands in the UK.² Migration was initially influenced by push/pull economic attractions and numbers grew as a

¹ From a calculation using census and UK Home Office immigration data. See appendix table A. In 2004, 18,640 immigrants from the Indian subcontinent were granted British citizenship as a result of marriage, which is more than citizenship as a result of marriage for all other immigrant groups put together, though total number of citizenship grants from the Indian subcontinent makes up only 28% of total. From Woollacott Simon Persons Granted British Citizenship United Kingdom, 2004 Home Office, British Government, 17 May 2005
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/hosb0805.pdf>

² Castles & Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York (3rd ed. 2003), p.73

result of chain migration.³ Immigrants tended to be lone males who were seen as important economic providers for the family and community in their country of origin.⁴ Those who were already married waited varying amounts of time depending on cultural and economic considerations before reuniting with them in Britain.⁵ Parents of single male immigrants arranged marriages for their sons with women from their communities in their country of origin, following the tradition of arranged marriage that prevailed in their culture.⁶ There had been a previous assumption that family reunification as a source of migration would diminish after primary immigration to the UK from the Indian subcontinent ended in the early 1970s.⁷ It was assumed that immigrants would seek spouses from within the growing immigrant community in Britain instead of from their home communities.⁸ However this migration flow has taken on a dynamic of its own, and the tradition of transnational marriage continues among second and third generation immigrants from the subcontinent.⁹ The number of transnational marriages has risen sharply since the abolishment of the 'primary purpose' rule in 1997.¹⁰ This rule had made it possible for immigration officials to prevent entry to spouses where they considered the primary reason for marriage was entry into the UK. It was felt that this immigration rule largely discriminated against South Asians, whose cultural practice of arranged marriage was judged unfairly to constitute a 'sham marriage' whose sole purpose was as a method of entry to the UK.¹¹

³ See Anwar, M (1979). *Myth of Return: Pakistanis in Britain*. Heinemann: London.

⁴ Ballard, Roger 'The Impact of Kinship in the Economic Dynamics of Transnational Networks: Reflections on some South Asian developments' (2001) p.16

⁵ For further discussion of factors relating to family reunification see *ibid* pp. 4-13

⁶ *ibid*. p.17 It is traditional for the bride to leave her family and live with the husband and her family.

⁷ Coleman, David A., *U.K. Statistics on Immigration: Development and Limitations* International Migration Review, Vol. 21, No. 4, pp.1146-9

Primary immigration from the Indian Subcontinent ended as a result of the 1971 Immigration Act in Britain, which essentially ended the privileged immigration rights of commonwealth member states.

⁸ Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris '*Thinking about Marriage*' Muslim Institute Trust and Bait-al-Mal al-Islami, (April 2005)

⁹ UK Home Office Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain, (UK Government White Paper) 2001

www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/document/cm53/5387/cm5387.pdf p.18 Marriage and family formation accounts for a large proportion of immigration from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and The assumption that ethnic communities will find spouses of the same culture within their community in the UK rather than from abroad has been proved wrong. (See *ibid*. p. 99)

¹⁰ The number of immigrants granted entry to the UK from the Indian subcontinent as a spouse or fiancée of a legal immigrant doubled between 1996 and 2001.

¹¹ Menski, W., 'South Asian Women in Britain, Family Integrity and the Primary Purpose Rule', in Barot, R., Bradley H. and Fenton, S. (eds.), *Ethnicity, Gender and Social Change* (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1999), pp.81-98

Transnationalism

The concept of transnationalism has gained increasing attention in the field of migration theory.¹² As Layton-Henry suggests, in a sense international migration always produces a type of transnational community, particularly with the increased ease of communication we experience today.¹³ All migrants retain links and loyalties to their homeland to a certain extent, as well as developing new links and interests in their host country.¹⁴ However, transnationalism should be distinguished from the loose ties and networks that many migrants retain with their country of origin. Portes developed a more precise definition of transnationalism as the existence of sustained and vigorous two-country contacts and activities which take place over a long period of time of at least one generation, involving a large proportion of the immigrant community.¹⁵ These transnational activities lead to the formation of transnational communities which are not bound by traditional borders, but instead have presence in two places simultaneously.¹⁶ This can take the form of economic, socio-cultural or political activity.¹⁷ In the South Asian context, strong and dense kinship networks, nourished by inter-marriage, serve to ensure the perpetuation of these transnational communities. This essay will concentrate on the socio-cultural and 'identity' dimensions of transnationalism and their effect on integration. This is in contrast to the existing literature which has predominantly focused on the economic elements of transnationalism.

Marriage in South Asian Society

The specific South Asian cultural notion of kinship and community obligation must be appreciated to understand the role marriage plays in the transnational community. Kinship and marriage are the most important ways in which networks are formed and maintained at the level of the household, the extended family or the wider *biraderi*

¹² Lie, 1995 quoted in Wahlbeck, Osten, 'Transnationalism and Diasporas: The Kurdish Example' WPTC-98-11, University of Oxford, 2001 www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/

¹³ Layton-Henry, Zig 'Transnational Communities, Citizenship and African-Caribbeans in Birmingham, WPTC- 02-07 www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk p. 4

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Portes, A. Guarnizo, L.E. and Landolt, P. 'Pitfalls and Promise of an emerging research field' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, March 1999, p.219

¹⁶ Portes, Alejandro, 'Globalization from Below: The Rise of Transnational Communities', Princeton University, September 1997 WPTC-98-01 www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/, p.4

¹⁷ Portes, A. Guarnizo, L.E. and Landolt, P. 'Pitfalls and Promise of an emerging research field' *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, March 1999, p.219

(descent group or 'brotherhood').¹⁸ Patrelinially extended families, which are strongly corporate in character, remain the basis of social organisation and inheritance.¹⁹ Marriages have an important role in nourishing extended kinship networks.²⁰ This is particularly true in the case of the transnational community, where transnational marriage is seen as an instrument to maintaining close links within the *biraderi* across borders.

The existence of strong transnational links between the immigrant communities and countries of origin means the search for potential marital partners is not restricted to the Asian community in the UK. Indeed the incidence of transnational marriage is associated with the limited potential marriage pool among British Asians population which is subdivided by status, education, language, religion, class, and *biraderi*. Identification with kinship networks and communities in the country of origin remain strong. As a result, traditional community values continue to govern individual and group behaviour within the transnational community. Marriage between people of different class, education and religion remains taboo in the Indian subcontinent, thus and also within the transnational community. This is especially the case in relatively poor rural areas in the subcontinent, where the majority of immigrants to Britain originate from, where kinship ties remain particularly strong.²¹

Most marriages follow the cultural tradition in the subcontinent of arranged marriage, whereby the match is agreed by the parents of the couple.²² It is largely through the network of the parents, rather than that of the child, that potential matches are found. Very often the parents have retained strong links to their homeland, and are highly engaged in the transnational community, particularly if one, or both, are first

¹⁸ Ballard, Roger 'The Impact of Kinship in the Economic Dynamics of Transnational Networks: Reflections on some South Asian developments', (2001) p.8

¹⁹ *ibid.* p.9 Extended families can consist of many hundreds of people, all of whom retain a sense of obligation and responsibility to one another, see Khan, Zafar, 'Diasporic Communities and Identity Formation: The post-colonial Kashmiri experience in Britain' *Imperium*, Vol. 1, December 2000

²⁰ *ibid.* p. 28

²¹ In rural areas, traditional practises and kinship ties remain especially strong and marriage outside the community is relatively unknown. This is particularly the case in certain sub-cultures such as Mirpuri immigrants from Pakistan in which first cousin marriage accounts for 60% of all marriages, and first cousin marriage is actively preferred and expected amongst kinship networks. Ballard, Roger 'The South Asian Presence in Britain and its Transnational Connections' in Singh, H. and Vertovec, S. (eds) *Culture and Economy in the Indian Diaspora*, London: Routledge, (2002) p.13

²² Traditionally these are agreed by the elders of a family, with an element of choice to the potential bride and groom in some cases. It should be noted that the large majority of arranged marriages are made with the willing consent of the bride and groom.

generation immigrants. Though a second generation Asian in Britain may have little personal experience of the community at home, if they are married to someone from that community in a transnational marriage then their spouse will retain strong personal networks within their country of origin.²³ This will permit and encourage them to find a transnational marriage for their children at the appropriate age. It is evident that transnational marriage is therefore self-perpetuating.

The fact that the parents of the couple are highly involved in the matchmaking process means that their values are given higher priority than the values of their offspring who are to be married, who themselves may have been born and brought up completely in Britain. Transnational marriage is seen as a method of cultural rejuvenation, particularly by elders of the immigrant family who may be concerned that their offspring who have grown up in Britain are losing touch with their heritage. This is a result of immigrants from South Asia continuing to define themselves and their children as part of the community of origin, and perpetuates this view.

There is a clear dynamic of internal status competition within *biraderi* which reinforces a drive for upward mobility in terms of wealth and reputation. Marriage is instrumental to maintaining and increasing the status of a family within the extended family or *biraderi*.²⁴ This instrumental perception of personal affairs in South Asian society is important to the understanding of marriage in the transnational community. Ballard proposes that immigrant families have the opportunity of 'marrying up' as a result of the relative wealth they have gained in moving to Britain.²⁵ Thus the families may use their experience and achievement in Britain to achieve local prestige in their community of origin.²⁶ As a result, marriage to spouses within the immigrant community in the UK is shunned because they are at the same point in the hierarchy

²³ Ballard, Roger 'The South Asian Presence in Britain and its Transnational Connections' in Singh, H. and Vertovec, S. (eds) *Culture and Economy in the Indian Diaspora*, London: Routledge, (2002) p.8

²⁴ Ballard, Roger 'The Impact of Kinship in the Economic Dynamics of Transnational Networks: Reflections on some South Asian developments', (2001), p.35

²⁵ For the daughter or son in-law in the country of origin there is the economic and social attraction of moving into transnational space that marriage to a migrant will offer. Ballard, Roger 'The Impact of Kinship in the Economic Dynamics of Transnational Networks: Reflections on some South Asian developments', (2001), p.30-31

²⁶ Gardner (1995) quoted in Ballard, Roger 'The South Asian Presence in Britain and its Transnational Connections' in Singh, H. and Vertovec, S. (eds) *Culture and Economy in the Indian Diaspora*, London: Routledge, (2002) p.16

when viewed within the framework of the transnational community.²⁷ Inter-personal relationships in South Asian context are based largely on ‘reciprocities of kinship’ and are regulated by a social ‘code of honour’²⁸. Marriage can be a tool to ensure relationships are kept in tact across borders and maintain the social status of the family within a country of origin. For example immigrants in the UK may have existing agreements or an outstanding debt to someone in their country of origin, and their daughter’s hand in marriage may be used to honour this debt.²⁹

Thus as a consequence of the specific role of marriage as a social tool in the South Asian context, transnational marriage plays a significant part in maintaining the strength of ties to the community of origin. The desire to maintain the social status of the family within the country of origin, potentially at the expense of lifestyle and status in Britain, is indicative of the strength of their identification as part of the transnational community. The implications of this orientation towards the transnational community for integration within the host country will be considered in the next section.

The Effect of Transnational Marriage on Community Integration

Since 1980, the British government has championed a multicultural policy with regard to immigrant integration. However multicultural policies have attracted increasing criticism for their role in reinforcing division between communities.³⁰ The widespread racial riots between British Asians and white British people in towns and cities in Northern England during the summer of 2001, and more recently between Black and Asian communities in Birmingham in 2005, have demonstrated acutely the problems of communities divided along ethnic and cultural grounds.³¹ The government commissioned report investigating the causes of the 2001 disturbances concluded there was a clear divide between ethnic communities. These ethnic communities led parallel lives in urban centres, with separate educational

²⁷ Ballard, Roger ‘The Impact of Kinship in the Economic Dynamics of Transnational Networks: Reflections on some South Asian developments’ WPTC-01-04, 2001, P.8

²⁸ *ibid* p.8

²⁹ Maqsood, Ruqaiyyah Waris ‘Thinking about Marriage’ Muslim Institute Trust and Bait-al-Mal al-Islami, (April 2005)

³⁰ Kundnani Arun, ‘The death of multiculturalism’ *Independent Race and Refugees Network* 1 April 2002 <http://www.irr.org.uk/2002/april/ak000001.html>

³¹ Foggo, D & Govan, F ‘Two men reported dead as race riots flare in Birmingham over alleged sex attack on girl’ *Sunday Telegraph*, October 23, 2005, and BBC News In-depth: Summer of Violence http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/uk/2001/summer_of_violence/default.stm

arrangements, community and voluntary bodies, employment, places of worship, language, social and cultural networks.³² As a result the report argued that the government should aim to foster integrated ‘cohesive communities’ rather than encouraging, whether advertently or inadvertently, separate community development through multicultural policies.³³ The importance of marriage patterns within and between ethnic groups as an indicator of community integration will be evaluated in this section.

Many theories of immigrant integration see intermarriage between immigrant groups as part of the process of assimilation, and an indicator of the level of integration of a particular group into a host society. Some see it as the most important factor in assimilation.³⁴ However, there is a very small proportion of intermarriage between the immigrant population from South Asia and other ethnic groups in Britain.³⁵ This is largely due to the culture in South Asian families described at length above, where marriage is used as a social tool and is heavily regulated by the social norms of the community. Even in cases where marriage within kinship networks is overlooked, the religious, ethno-linguistic and caste background of the match retains importance in the arrangement of marriage.³⁶ Immigrants from the Indian subcontinent are unlikely

³² UK Home Office, Chaired by Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, 2001

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/keydocs.html>, p.9

³³ UK Home Office, Chaired by Ted Cante, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, 2001

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/comrace/cohesion/keydocs.html>

³⁴ see Kennedy, Ruby Jo Reeves, ‘Single or Triple Melting-Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870-1940’ *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 49, No. 4 (Jan., 1944), pp. 331-339 and Marcson, Simon, ‘A Theory of Intermarriage and Assimilation’ *Social Forces*, Vol. 29, No. 1. (Oct., 1950 - May, 1951), pp. 75-78.

³⁵ According to the 2001 census, only 2% of all married couples in Britain are in an interethnic relationship. Those from South Asian background are the least likely to have an interethnic marriage. Only 6 per cent of Indians, 4 per cent of Pakistanis, and 3 per cent of Bangladeshis had married someone outside of their ethnic group. This is a very small percentage compared to other ethnic groups in Britain, for example 29% of Black Caribbean men and 20% of Black Caribbean women were in interethnic marriages. Of ‘other Black’ group, (considered to mostly account for young black people born in Britain) 48% of men were married to women outside the black ethnic group.

2001 Census Data, Office of National Statistics, UK Home Office

<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1090&Pos=&ColRank=1&Rank=224> It should be noted that South Asian immigrants for whom Britain was not the first country of emigration, for example Kenyan Indians who migrated to Britain in large numbers in the late 1960s and Ugandan Indians who were expelled from Uganda in the 1970s, are more likely to marry out of their ethnic group and this should be considered when viewing the figures from Indian intermarriage.

³⁶ Dalit Solidarity Network ‘No Escape Caste Discrimination in the UK’ *International Dalit Solidarity Network*, July 2006 <http://www.idsn.org/Documents/pdf/UK-Diaspora.pdf> and Muir, Hugh ‘Caste divide is blighting Indian communities in UK’, *The Guardian*, Tuesday July 4, 2006

to share all these factors in common with white British or other ethnic groups. The variety of religious beliefs and social groups among immigrants from the Indian subcontinent are a major regulating factor in marriage decisions which mean that even amongst different immigrant groups from the Indian subcontinent there is little intermarriage. This is in contrast to the situation in America considered by Kennedy where religion was the deciding factor in inter-marriage.³⁷ The fact that different immigrant groups shared a religion meant that inter-marriage was more commonplace.

Milton Gordon's model of assimilation mentions intermarriage, but sees it as a step following other types of assimilation. There have been many critiques of his model but it remains a seminal work in assimilation literature.³⁸ Gordon presents a seven dimensional model of assimilation, the key to which, he postulates, is not acculturation, (cultural and behavioural assimilation), but 'structural assimilation' (the large scale entrance of ethnic minorities into the cliques, clubs and primary-group institutions of the 'core' sub-society). In the modern British context this might refer to such institutions as school Parent Teacher Associations (PTA), neighbourhood watch groups, local councils etc. The focus is on meaningful relationships between ethnic groups at this social level as well as the more impersonal secondary world of economic and political affairs.³⁹ Once this is achieved then the levels of marital, identificational, attitude receptional (absence of prejudice), behaviour receptional (absence of discrimination) and finally civic assimilation (absence of value and power conflict) will follow.⁴⁰ Intermarriage is thus considered an inevitable stage of overall assimilation after structural assimilation has occurred. However, even if structural integration of immigrants from South Asia could be said to be taking place in Britain intermarriage would not inevitably follow, due to the cultural and religious particularities of the context expressed above. Milton's model fails to consider the

³⁷ Kennedy, Ruby Jo Reeves, 'Single or Triple Melting-Pot? Intermarriage Trends in New Haven, 1870-1940' *The American Journal of Sociology* Vol. 49, No. 4 (Jan., 1944), pp. 331-339

³⁸ Barron Milton L., Book review of Milton M. Gordon's 'Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins' *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 29, No. 6. (Dec., 1964), p 941

³⁹ *ibid.*

⁴⁰ Chapter III 'the nature of assimilation' in Gordon, Milton M. 'Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins' Oxford University Press: Oxford (1970 Reprint)

detrimental affect that lack of intermarriage, and more particularly transnational marriage, will have on the structural assimilation of immigrants.

Intermarriage between immigrant groups in a society is an important step towards assimilation and preventing the perpetuation of a segmented society.⁴¹ From the critique of the models above, it is clear that existing theories of integration involving marriage are difficult to apply to this particular context, due to the specific role of marriage in the culture and society of the Indian subcontinent. The existing models also do not accommodate for the prevalence of transnational marriage. Transnational marriage is likely to be even more problematic than lack of intermarriage in Britain for individual and group assimilation, in the case of either segmented assimilation within the immigrant community⁴² or assimilation into the wider British society. The South Asian tradition of transnational marriage sets this immigrant community apart from others in Britain such as those from African-Caribbean background, (of whom the overwhelming majority marry British partners, be they of black, white or other ethnicity).⁴³ The high rate of transnational marriage, instead of marriage within Britain reflects the prioritisation by Asian immigrants of their identity as part of their community of origin over their identities as part of the immigrant community in Britain or the wider British society. Relative status, wealth and education in the wider British society is viewed largely as of secondary importance to status within the country of origin.

There is a tendency within the public discourse to assume that this orientation towards the country of origin is due to the particular values of the immigrant community, that somehow they are unable or unwilling to assimilate. To a large extent the orientation to the community in the country of origin is related to the South Asian conceptions of community and kinship explored at length above. However, there should be recognition of the role the host country plays in encouraging the insular nature of the

⁴¹ The dangers of segmented communities were outlined in the Cantle report mentioned above. UK Home Office, Chaired by Ted Cantle, *Community Cohesion: A Report of the Independent Review Team*, 2001

⁴² Zhou, Min 'Segmented Assimilation: Issues, Controversies, and Recent Research on the New Second Generation' *IMR 31(4)* pp.974-1008

⁴³ Layton-Henry, Zig 'Transnational Communities, Citizenship and African-Caribbeans in Birmingham, WPTC- 02-07 www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk, p.22

immigrant community.⁴⁴ The social exclusion and alienation which many Indians, Pakistani and Bangladeshi immigrants felt on arrival to Britain is still keenly felt by many, even those who have been in Britain for many years or several generations.⁴⁵ As a result, for their own self affirmation they may look back to their community of origin to define their identity and status, instead of regarding themselves within the framework of the rather negative status and identity assigned to them by the host society in Britain.

Immigrants from a rural, lower class and uneducated background have a particularly strong reliance on *biraderi* in terms of accessing the transnational space through information networks, and upon arrival in Britain in terms of housing assistance and economic interdependence. Those immigrants from the Indian subcontinent who are highly skilled professionals with good English language ability are much less likely to be so reliant on these networks. Thus immigrants from a rural and less educated background are much more engaged in the *biraderi* and are likely to follow cultural norms regarding marriage much more rigidly. As a result, many transnational marriages involve spouses from their communities in the Indian subcontinent, and thus come from similar rural and uneducated backgrounds as the immigrant.⁴⁶ These spouses in turn are usually completely dependant on the *biraderi* network for their social and economic survival when they enter Britain, particularly if they do not speak the language of the host country. As Zhou notes, levels of education and level of English proficiency correlate to levels of achievement and integration of immigrants into the host society.⁴⁷ The language barrier forces new spouses to remain inward looking within the immigrant community of her or his particular background. Transnational marriage to people who don't speak English therefore hinders the integration of the individual and the community. The strength of this community allows the new immigrant to live quite normally with very limited English, by using shops and other services that are owned by other members of the community. The whole of the family's social and public life can also be carried out within the *biraderi*.

⁴⁴ Wahlbeck, Osten, 'Transnationalism and Diasporas: The Kurdish Example' WPTC-98-11, University of Oxford, 2001 p. 12

⁴⁵ Ballard, Roger 'The South Asian Presence in Britain and its Transnational Connections' in Singh, H. and Vertovec, S. (eds) *Culture and Economy in the Indian Diaspora*, London: Routledge, (2002) p.13

⁴⁶ *ibid*

⁴⁷ Zhou, Min 'Segmented Assimilation: Issues, Controversies, and Recent Research on the New Second Generation' *IMR 31(4)* pp.990

Therefore by regulating social and cultural norms, and the enforcing the imperatives of extended family, transnational social networks can pose an obstacle to assimilation.⁴⁸

Transnational Marriage: The Gender Dimension

There is a larger proportion of women than men who come to Britain as a spouse through transnational marriage.⁴⁹ This is the result of Asian men in Britain preferring more traditional brides who have not been brought up surrounded by western values of women and who are likely to have different expectations of married life. Women of South Asian background tend to have a much more difficult process of integration as a result of a number of social and cultural reasons. As explained above these women come from traditional, rural backgrounds and are likely to have less education or English language ability than their male counterparts (due to the privileging of males in education). There is little opportunity to improve their language skills as their lives are largely regulated by their husband and their husband's family, as their culture dictates.⁵⁰ Male immigrants are likely to be slightly more educated and have the advantage of a strong male social and economic network within the immigrant community, with much more freedom of association than women.

There is a gendered nature to the impact on integration of spouses who enter Britain through transnational marriages. Second generation of British Asians, who having grown up in Britain, and for example, who have gone through the education system in Britain, have made contacts outside the kinship group. However, the result of marriage of second or third generation immigrants with spouses from the Indian subcontinent, who are heavily engaged and reliant on the kinship network, is that they are drawn back into the kinship network as a social regulator by their new spouse. This is particularly the case for women who may be second generation immigrants in Britain and who have to adapt extremely quickly to the different expectations of her new spouse from the Indian subcontinent on the role of women. She is obliged to

⁴⁸ Khan, Zafar, 'Diasporic Communities and Identity Formation: The post-colonial Kashmiri experience in Britain' *Imperium*, Vol. 1, December 2000, p.7

⁴⁹ UK Home Office, *Control of immigration: Statistics United Kingdom* Office of National Statistics, November 2005 <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm66/6690/6690.pdf>

⁵⁰ See interview in appendix and Samad, Yunas and Eade, John, *Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage* Community Liaison Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/clureport.pdf> p.40

conform to his expectations as a result of the traditional patriarchal values of the society, which are perpetuated in the transnational community.

Transnational Marriage and Fertility

There is a tendency of higher fertility rates among transnational marriages. This has a particular impact in cities where there is a concentration of immigrants from south Asia and a large incidence of transnational marriage. For example, in Bradford (a city of 467,668 with 22% of this population being of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi descent⁵¹) the percentage of all children born to foreign-born mothers is 30%. In the London borough of Tower Hamlets, which has an ethnic minority population of 49%, the percentage of children born to foreign-born mothers is 68%.⁵² The integration of the children of transnational marriages has a high chance of being stunted due to English not being the first language in the home or community, (which affects educational attainment) and the lack of integration of their parents in the wider British community. This is particularly the case if their mothers, who have responsibility for their care, are foreign born. Transnational marriage therefore leads to higher fertility rates among certain sectors of the population, which has a substantial impact on the demography of several British cities.

Transnational Marriage and the Demography of Urban Centres

In Britain there is a tendency for new migrants from the Indian subcontinent to gravitate to certain urban centres.⁵³ Though there is some debate as to whether there is really the formulation of ethnic 'ghettos' as Trevor Phillips of the Commission for Racial Equality recently stated,⁵⁴ there is a visible tendency for some areas of some

⁵¹ Census Data, Office of National Statistics, Home Office
<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/pop2001/bradford.asp>

⁵² From 2001 census data from Migration Watch UK
http://www.migrationwatchuk.org/frameset.asp?menu=researchpapers&page=briefingpapers/other/transnational_marriage.asp.

First generation mothers are likely to have more children as a result of cultural tradition.

⁵³ See Castles & Miller, *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Palgrave Macmillan: New York (3rd ed. 2003), p. 228 and Born Abroad: An Immigration Map of Britain http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/uk/05/born_abroad/html/overview.stm

⁵⁴ Phillips, Trevor *After 7/7: Sleepwalking to segregation* 22 September 2005 at the Manchester Council for Community Relations <http://www.cre.gov.uk/Default.aspx.LocID-0hgnew00s.RefLocID-0hg00900c008001002.Lang-EN.htm>, disputed by Professor Dorling (Dorling, Danny 'Why Trevor is wrong about race ghettos' *The Observer*, Sunday September 25, 2005) and Cathie Marsh Centre for

inner cities to have an extremely high proportion of immigrants.⁵⁵ The economic hardship experienced by many new immigrants⁵⁶ and the low housing prices within these ethnic enclaves creates an enclave economy, which leads to perpetuation of the so-called 'ghetto'.⁵⁷ It is usually the second or third generation of immigrants who move out of these 'ghettos' and become less dependent on the immigrant community in the 'ethnic enclave' for their social and economic survival.⁵⁸ Transnational marriage results in a new generation of immigrants, who do not have the social or economic capital to exist independently outside of these ghettos, conjoined to second generation immigrants. Each time the second generation of immigrants reach a level of maturity and potentially has gained the economic and social capital to leave the ghetto, transnational marriage has the effect of short-circuiting the progression to integration, and draws them back into the 'ghetto'.

Transnational Marriage: Future Trends

As mentioned above, the incidence of transnational marriage is growing. However future trends are difficult to predict. There is some evidence that there is a growing gap between generations of immigrants and their views on religion, culture and identity, which affects their views on marriage.⁵⁹ Those born and raised in Britain are less engaged in the transnational community than their parents. As a result they may be happy to accept the idea of an arranged marriage, but less willing to accept a transnational marriage because they are more realistic about the chances of success.⁶⁰ Through their education and contact with the wider British society and media, they value their lifestyle and education in Britain and have come to question the importance of maintaining their status in the transnational community.⁶¹ This is

Census and Survey Research, *Mixing in Sheffield: A Profile*, Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Survey Research, University of Manchester. (2002)

⁵⁵ Sheffield City Council, *Ethnic Group Maps*, Sheffield City Council Corporate Policy Unit September 2003 <http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/facts-figures/2001-census/ethnic-origin>

⁵⁶ The percentage of new Bangladeshi and Pakistani immigrants earning less than 50% of median earnings are at 63.3% and 35.4% respectively compared to 21% for the British-born population. Kyambi, Sarah, *Beyond Black and White: mapping new immigrant communities*, Institute for Public Policy Research, London, September 2005. (The report defines new immigrants in 2005 as those who were born abroad and arrived in the UK in 1990 or later.)

⁵⁷ Alba, R and Nee, V. (1997) 'Rethinking Assimilation Theory for a New Era of Immigration' *IMR* 31(4) p.852 (check this)

⁵⁸ *ibid*

⁵⁹ See interviews in Samad, Yunas and Eade, John, *Community Perceptions of Forced Marriage* Community Liaison Unit, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, p.95

⁶⁰ *ibid*

⁶¹ *ibid*. p.96

particularly true of Asian women brought up in Britain, who are set to lose the most freedom and opportunities through a transnational marriage. Second and third generation immigrants view themselves increasingly as British Asians, rather than viewing themselves within the framework of the community of the country of origin. As a result of this, the values upon which a potential spouse is judged are likely to change. Thus educational level and language ability may become more important than status and *biraderi* connection when choosing a spouse for their son or daughter, whether from the immigrant community in Britain or from their country of origin. Inter-marriage within the immigrant community would be likely to increase the integration of the immigrants, both as a community and at the level of individuals, albeit segmented assimilation. Transnational marriages which were arranged with the potential integration of the spouse in Britain in mind, for example English language ability being considered in the search for a spouse in the country of origin, would also increase the likelihood of successful individual and community integration.

Conclusion

Transnational marriage is prevalent among immigrants from the Indian subcontinent in Britain. The particular use of marriage as a social tool in South Asian society and the myriad of social rules surrounding marriage retain importance within the transnational communities. The adherence to social rules and the imperatives of the *biraderi* in the choice of marriage partners is evidence of the orientation of immigrants towards the transnational community.

Transnational marriage often has the effect of 'short-circuiting' the generational integration of immigrants into society. Transnational marriage is particularly common among poorer more traditional immigrant groups who come from rural areas and follow social norms surrounding marriage strongly. These immigrants are likely to be less educated and have little social and economic capital beyond the *biraderi* group. As a result they and their spouses are likely to remain in ethnic 'ghettos' and have little contact with wider British society. There are more women than men from South Asia marrying British Asians in transnational marriages, and evidence of a higher than average fertility rate among foreign born mothers.

Transnational marriage is an aspect of migration that is relevant to demographers. This essay has demonstrated the demographic impact of transnational marriage between immigrants from South Asians and British Asians of second or third generations.

Appendix

Table A

Information from Migration Watch UK, using Home Office and 2001 Census data from the Office of National Statistics.

The estimate of percentage of people marrying a spouse from the Indian Subcontinent is borne out by comparing the average number of people of sub continental origin aged 15,16 or 17 at the 2001 census with the numbers admitted to the UK, or granted an extension to stay in the UK, as a spouse or fiancé(e) in 2003 :

	Average no. of people in each year of 15-17 age group in 2001 census	Grants of leave to enter /extensions of leave as a spouse or fiancé(e) 2003 ⁶²	Approx. percentage marrying spouse from ISC
Pakistani - men	7831	3773 (women)	48%
Pakistani - women	7484	2982 (men)	40%
Bangladeshi - men	3273	1960 (women)	60%
Bangladeshi - women	3127	1235 (men)	40%
Indian – men	8984	3378 (women)	38%
Indian- women	8672	1317 (men)	15%

Table B

Percentage of married people in inter-ethnic marriages, by ethnic group and sex, April 2001, England & Wales, from the Office of National Statistics.

QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

⁶² Home Office Control of Immigration Statistics 2003 CM 6363. Extensions assumed to be in the same proportion of men and women as admissions

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